

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2582

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SEOUL 6656

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PDIP, KS, US
SUBJECT: KIM DONG-JO: MORE DISCUSSION

REF: SEOUL 6567

1. I MET WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER AT HIS REQUEST IN HIS OFFICE AFTERNOON JULY 28. HE SAID THAT IN LIGHT OF RECENT DISCUSSIONS HE HAD DECIDED TO CUT SHORT HIS VACATION, THAT HE HAD SEEN THE PRIME MINISTER, AND THAT HE WAS FULLY UP TO DATE.

2. IN INFORMED THE FOREIGN MINISTER THAT I WAS STILL UNDER INSTRUCTIONS TO SEE THE PRESIDENT, TO DELIVER THE LETTER FROM THE SPEAKER AND CONGRESSMAN RHODES, AND TO EXPLAIN THE PROBLEMS FACING THE CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP. I RECOGNIZED THE DIFFICULTIES PRESENTED BY THE PRESIDENT'S VACATION AND SUGGESTED THAT A FOCUS ON PRACTICAL PROCEDURES MIGHT BREAK THE PRESENT IMPASSE AND PREVENT A FURTHER ESCALATION OF TENSION. I STRESSED AGAIN THE POSITIVE IMPACT IN WASHINGTON OF HIS STATEMENT THAT THE ROKG WOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO SEE THAT KIM DONG-JO'S RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED WOULD BE POSITIVE AND FORTHCOMING. HOWEVER, I SAID THE CONGRESS WAS STILL UNCOMFORTABLE AT NOT HAVING SWORN TESTIMONY AND AT THE RISK OF
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LOOKING FOOLISH IF THE PROCEDURE, ONCE INITIATED, FAILED TO PRODUCE A POSITIVE RESULT. THEREFORE, IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT THE UNDERTAKING OF THE ROKG TO PRODUCE THE BEST POSSIBLE RESPONSE FROM KIM DONG-JO SERVE AS THE KEYNOTE OF ANY FUTURE EFFORT.

3. I NOTED THAT THE ROKG POSITION HAD NOT BEEN TOTALLY

APPRECIATED IN THE U.S. AND NEITHER THE PUBLIC NOR THE CONGRESS FULLY REALIZED THE WILLINGNESS OF THE ROKG TO COOPERATE IN THIS MATTER. AS A WAY OF CORRECTING THIS, I OFFERED TWO EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE MOVES THE ROKG MIGHT MAKE: (A) HAVE AMBASSADOR KIM CALL ON THE SPEAKER AND EXPLAIN THE ROKG POSITION, HIGHLIGHTING THE ROKG'S UNDERTAKING WITH RESPECT TO KIM DONG-JO'S RESPONSE; (B) HAVE KIM DONG-JO TAKE THE INITIATIVE WITH A CALL TO THE SPEAKER STATING THAT THE MATTER HAD GONE ON TOO LONG AND ASSURING THE SPEAKER OF HIS INTENTION TO ANSWER QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FULLY AND FORTHRIGHTLY. I EMPHASIZED THAT THE SPEAKER WAS UNDER GREAT PRESSURE AND THAT NEITHER EXAMPLE WOULD BE EFFECTIVE WITHOUT A POSITIVE STATEMENT OF ROKG INTENTIONS REGARDING KIM DONG-JO'S RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS.

4. I THEN NOTED THE RECENT FAVORABLE ACTION OF THE SENATE PASSAGE OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE LEGISLATION AND THE MODIFIED PERCY AMENDMENT, AND THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO THE SPEAKER AND SENATOR BYRD. I SAID THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE LEGISLATION NOW APPEARED LIKELY TO BE DEBATED IN THE HOUSE EARLY NEXT WEEK AND THUS TIMING OF ROKG INITIATIVES WAS IMPORTANT. THE FOREIGN MINISTER EXPRESSED SATISFACTION AT THE SMOOTH PASSAGE OF SECURITY LEGISLATION IN THE SENATE AND THE HOPE THAT THE HOUSE WOULD ACT IN A SIMILAR MANNER. HE ADDED
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THAT SUCH ACTIONS MADE IT EASIER TO MOVE FORWARD ON OTHER MATTERS.

5. FOLLOWING A REVIEW OF THE STRESSES WHICH HAVE BESET OUR RELATIONS OVER THE PAST YEAR, THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THERE WERE ONLY TWO POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO THE KIM DONG-JO AFFAIR: EITHER TO BURY IT AND FORGET IT OR TO FIND A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION. FROM HIS READING OF THE MOOD OF THE U.S. CONGRESS HE SAW THE SECOND OPTION AS THE ONLY REAL ALTERNATIVE. HE DID NOT KNOW HOW KIM DONG-JO CURRENTLY VIEWED THE SITUATION AND THAT IT MIGHT BE BETTER TO HAVE QUESTIONS IN ADVANCE OF ANY ROKG REACTION. I ASSURED THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF MY BELIEF THAT QUESTIONS TO KIM DONG-JO WOULD BE FRAMED IN A MANNER CALCULATED TO CAUSE THE LEAST EMBARRASSMENT AND TO DRAW THE BEST POSSIBLE RESPONSES.

6. THE FOREIGN MINISTER THEN SHIFTED GROUND TO STATE THAT HE WAS SOMEWHAT PUZZLED BY CONGRESSIONAL COMMENTS ON THE SPEAKER'S INITIATIVE. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE RESPONSE HAD BEEN CLEAR AND HE HAD GONE OUT OF HIS WAY TO TELL ME THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED THE MATTER DIRECTLY WITH THE PRESIDENT. I TOLD THE FOREIGN MINISTER THAT I HAD REPORTED

FULLY TO WASHINGTON BUT THAT CONGRESS WAS STILL PRESSING ITS CASE AND I WAS STILL UNDER INSTRUCTIONS TO SEEK A MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT. UNLESS FORWARD PROGRSS WERE MADE, THESE INSTRUCTIONS WOULD STAND AND TENSIONS WOULD CONTINUE. I SAID WHAT WE NEEDED WAS AN OFFICIAL SIGNAL THAT COULD BE PASSED TO WASHINGTON THAT THE ROKG WOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO OBTAIN MEANINGFUL RESPONSES FROM KIM DONG-JO. FOLLOWING THAT WE COULD DISCUSS HOW SUCH RESPONSES WERE TO BE OBTAINED. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SEOUL 6656

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TO HAVE PROCEDURE NAILED DOWN IN A MATTER SATISFACTORY TO CONGRESS BEFORE PROCEEDING TOO FAR.

7. IN CONCLUSION I URGED THAT THE ROKG MAKE THE FIRST MOVE BY PROVIDING ME WITH A POSITIVE STATEMENT ON KIM DONG-JO'S RESPONSE. SUCH AN ACTION WOULD BE WELCOMED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND COULD BE USED IN AN EFFORT TO CONVINCE CONGRESS OF THE REASONABLE POSITION OF THE ROKG. ONLY IN THIS MANNER DID I SEE ANY PROSPECT OF GETTING OFF DEAD CENTER AND PROVIDING SUPPORT TO THOSE WHO WISH TO CONCLUDE THIS MATTER.

8. THE FOREIGN MINISTER CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT HE WOULD PROCEED ON THE FOLLOWING UNDERSTANDING: THAT HE WOULD WORK TO GET A FORMAL STATEMENT ON THE ROKG POSITION ON KIM DONG'JO'S TESTIMONY THAT HE COULD PASS TO THE DEPARTMENT. IF THIS STATEMENT PROVED ACCEPTABLE TO CONGRESS, THEN WE WOULD PROCEED ALONG THE LINES OF THE FORMULA PROPOSED TO THE ETHICS COMMITTEE STAFF BY AMBASSADOR KIM. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE WOULD ALSO NEED TO DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH KIM DONG-JO AND

ASCERTAIN HIS VIEWS ON THE MATTER. HE SAID HE WOULD
LOOK INTO IT ON THOSE GROUNDS IN AN EFFORT TO FIND
A MUTUALLY AGREEABLE SOLUTION AND TO CONTINUE WHAT HE
PERCEIVED AS THE SLOW MOVEMENT OF U.S./ROK RELATIONS
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IN A POSITIVE DIRECTION.

9. COMMENT: MY DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER
APPEAR TO HAVE MOVED THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO FURTHER
EFFORT. IT IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT THE END RESULT AT
THIS JUNCTURE, PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF JUST RECEIVED
WASHINGTON POST INTERVIEW IN WHICH JAWORSKI STATES HIS
INTENTION TO RESIGN.
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